that the lot of the sea-faring Arasars was such a hard one or that they needed more assistance than they are at present receiving at the hands of Government. What you said about the raising of the price of salt represents a very serious position indeed. The consequence is that fisherfolk are not able to cure very efficiently and properly and are thereby unable to compete on favourable or even terms with their brethren in British India. I enquired of the Director of Fisheries what the reason of this high rate of salt for fish-curing is. He told me that it used to be 14 annas a maund, then when the Government of India raised the duty of salt, we did the same in Travancore and the difference between 14 annas and the actual selling price of salt, and the general price of salt in Travancore was so great that the salt was raised to Re. 1-as. 8. Then came the lowering of the duty on salt in British India as well as in Travancore and although the general price of salt was lowered, apparently the fisherfolk and their fish-curing salt was forgotten and its price still remains at the high-water mark at which it was left when the price of salt receded. I will have the matter taken up immediately and see if we can do something to ameliorate the conditions as applying to fish-curing.

The other point you took up was the larger appointment of Arasars, that is, the fisher-folks themselves in the fish-curing yards. I also questioned the Director about that and there is no doubt at present that there is only one Arasar in the department. That is a question on which the Director and you and I are agreed. There is one man and only one and he is not a qualified fish curing expert. Therefore the Director has promised to take up the early consideration of the matter and submit his proposals to the Government, for the selection of qualified Arasars for special training in fish curing methods. A school will be opened shortly at Alleppey for the training of men in fish-curing—it may also be necessary to open such another training centre somewhere in South Travancore and when we get men trained it will be possible to get in the several fish-curing yards (and more yards may be opened) qualified and trained men of whom I trust several will be Arasars.

39. Assignment of a fixed percentage of the revenues of each taluk for public works in that taluk.

MR. K. VELAYUDHAN PANICKAN (*Member, Karunagapalli taluk, Group II*) said that Travancore had an annual revenue of over one crore and thirty lakhs of rupees. Of this more than fifty lakhs of rupees was realised from land revenue alone. It was stated in the annual administration reports that a certain proportion of the State revenues was expended on public works every year. But under the existing system Government were not able to secure the timely execution of all the public works necessary in the various taluks. Delay in the execution of sanctioned works also told upon the execution of other works which could not be taken up before those that were sanctioned were completed. It was highly necessary for these reasons to map out a new scheme which would ensure the execution of all the necessary

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works in the different parts of the State at the proper time and without delay. The following suggestion might be useful for the formulation of the scheme. A fixed percentage, say 25 per cent of the revenues raised from each taluk should be set apart for public works in that taluk. This proposal had already been brought to the notice of Government on several former occasions; they might take up the question without further loss of time.

DEWAN'S REPLY: It is not possible to accept your suggestion. The existing defects in the matter of communications will be remedied on the constitution of Road Boards on which non-officials will also be represented.

40. The necessity of a coastal road from Alleppey to Arthinkal.

MR. K. T. RAPHAEL (*Member, Ambalapuzha taluk, Group II*) said that he was bringing to the serious notice of the Government the most urgent and longfelt need of a very large number of coastal villages, which had so to speak been completely overlooked by the Government. Before doing so he had to observe that in opening a line of communication the most important factor that had to guide the authorities was the principle of utility. Every road and every canal must be so planned as to be of the greatest use to the largest number of people. It was on the strength of this principle more than others that he appealed to the Government for the immediate opening of a coastal road from Alleppey to Arthinkal and in this connection the following points deserved the earnest notice of Government :—

(1) The length of the coastal road under consideration was about twelve miles from Alleppey to Arthinkal passing through eleven thickly populated villages.

(2) These villages were the most thickly populated and fertile portions of the above taluks.

(3) If there was a direct road along the coast many more coir factories and other institutions would spring up in these villages and thus relieve the distress of thousands of poor people who were unable to find work.

(4) Now that the fertility of the costal areas was fast decreasing on account of intensive cultivation, the soil could be improved only by bringing manure from outside; and unless there was a road along the coastal line it would not be possible to effect this improvement.

(5) It appeared that at present the idea of the Government was to give a few cross-roads from the Alleppey—Shertallai Road; but this will not satisfy the real needs of the coastal villages.

In conclusion, the member expressed the hope that Government would take up the road at once and do a good turn to the people of Shertallai who were already very much dejected by the way in which Government had rejected their needs.

DEWAN'S REPLY: Mr. Raphael, this particular road has been included in the road programme and the question of its construction

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